Our Times In Prophecy, No. 18.

BY JOHN CULP.

Time of the judgment.

Respecting the time of the judgment, according to views presented heretofore, it has already in a degree been manifested in these instances: first the recognition as noticed in No. 9, of Romanism and Protestantism as co-workers in the promotion of humanity religiously. This as has been noticed came to pass in the combination of the woman and the beast which was termed the beast of the judgment.

Again in the declaration as noticed in No. 8, of these two great parties being mutually interested in the political welfare of the world. This also is fulfilled and in a degree points out the time of the judgment. Then again, the time of the judgment in a general view is pointed out by Dan. 12 : 1, 4 in making mention of the increase in knowledge (having reference to our day of enlightenment in inventions and discoveries) and trouble attending it, which has reference to the judgment and troublesome end we are to experience in our time. But having come this far and in addition having noticed the cause of this judgment in the frail foundation upon which our system of traffic is based and the decay that we are hastening to, it is desired to more minutely notice the time of this judgment.

This reference of Daniel also harmonizes with John the Revelator in the shewing of the judgment in which they seem to agree in pointing out by referring to the affairs of this world. Hence if we wish to learn something more definite respecting the time of the judgment we will still have to extend our inquiries in the affairs of this world, particularly in that of traffic, and more especially that of the depressions which has attended the world in this respect, for from the appearances of things it will be in some one of those low-spirited depressions in traffic that our system will pass away.

Professional economists have divided the causes of "hard times" into different parts attributing their cause sometimes as originating in that of industry and at other times to that of finance and commerce. That there are different and even many secondary causes for our depressions will not admit of a single doubt. But these, it is evident all have another common cause. As absurd, and unreasonable, and even may say barbarous as it may appear, the principal cause of a depression arises from an abundance of wealth or surplus stocks.

A country built up and improved and having excessive wealth of peace or health, is by our present system of government and traffic subject to a depression. While to the contrary a brisk trade is always urged in the improvement of a new country or a time of war, or new discoveries that demand great labor and expenditure of time and money, or famine and failure of crops.

These are the common causes that produce all the prosperous and depressed times that our system of traffic has been subject to. That these are facts shall constitute the main point in this number, in order that we may arrive at a conclusion respecting the time of the judgment. For it is in the non-occurrence of the ills and laborious improvements in our present system that will cause it to pass away. For to prove the barbarous assertion that the ills of this life tend to make this political system of ours to flourish in traffic, while an abundance of the comforts of this life tend to the stagnation of it; we will for the first notice one instance back of our age of inventions; and to do this we will quote Richard Hakluyt in the year 1584.

"But wee, for all the statutes that hitherto can be devised, and the sharpe execution of the same in poonishinge idle and lazye persons, for wante of sufficient occasion of honest employment, cannot deliver our common wealthe from multitudes of loyterers ond idle vagabonds. Truthe it is, that throughe our longe peace and seldom sicknes (twoo singular blessinges of Almightie God,) wee are growen more populous than ever heretofore; so that nowe there are of every arte and science so many, that they can hardly lyve one by another, nay rather they are readie to eate upp one another; yea many thousandes of idle persons are within this realm, which having no way to be set on work be either mutinous and seeke alteration in the state, or at least very burdensome to the common wealthe, and often fall to pilfering and thieveinge and other lewdnes; whereby all the prisons of the land are daily pestered and stuffed full of them, where either they pitifully pyne away, or els at lengthe are miserably hanged even XXti at a clappe oute of some one jayle." See introduction in the first Annual Report of Labor.

Here the blessings in life—"two singular blessings of Almighty God"—"peace and seldom sickness," prominently stand forth as the cause of their depressed and troublesome times.

Of course it might be urged in this case as it frequently is that it was over-population that caused the depression Mr. Hakluyt's time. But this will not do. We should never justify human governments with all their irregularities and even sinful practices, and accuse the arrangements of our Creator with irregularities, which we evidently do when we cry over-population in such instances in the face of the command and blessings pronounced in being "fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." But the cause is attributable in this instance, as it will be in all other instances that will be noticed hereafter, to improper and unwise and selfish human legislation, when we have attained to wealth and an over production as it is stated in this case; "in every art and science," so that it seems there was not "sufficient occasion of honest employment." Therefore we prove by this one instance that wealth and the comforts and blessings of this life are detrimental to the prosperity in the traffic of worldly governments. Therefore we should not wonder how and why that blood stain of "all that have been slain upon the earth" will be found in the "city" when the weakness of human legislation once is fully exposed in the end.

Hence we conclude also that when there is cause sufficient for laborious improvements (or hand labor,) and wars and famines and all ills of life that may be avoided cease, then will be the time of the judgment, which will be the point sought after.

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"What have they seen in thine House"?

There is something in this story of Hezekiah which wonderfully illustrates divine goodness and wisdom, and human weakness and infirmity. We find here first God delivered Israel or delivered Jerusalem. When the enemies wrote their insulting letter, and Hezekiah spread it before the Lord, God sent an angel, a mighty angel, not one of these black angels that sneak around in the dark corners and tip over chairs and tables and such sort of trash, but an angel that in one single night slew 185,000 men, left them dead upon the plain, and Jerusalem was delivered. And the next thing we see Hezekiah is told, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." His life had been devoted to God, and if at that time he had bowed his head in death, it would have stood out as one of the most marked examples of fidelity to God that the world has ever seen. But he was not prepared to accept the will of God, he turned his face toward the wall, he plead and begged and prayed, and God sent word to him, "I have added to thy life fifteen years." And then he records his deliverance and praises God for it. But he little knew the snares that were before him, the dangers that beset his path. Right there when he had been brought back from death came a temptation. The king of Babylon had heard of his sickness, and sent messengers with gifts and congratulations. There was his opportunity, there was his time to tell of God's work and God's glory. There was his time to send back into that distant land the knowledge of the Lord, every opportunity to do it, but what did he do? He began to show his wealth. He took them through his palace, he showed them his precious things, his silver, his gold, his ointment, his spices, his armor, everything but God, and then the prophet came. What have they seen in thine house? Now that is the question I want to emphasize here today. As men redeemed from death, brought back from the pit, rescued from sin and wrath, what do men see in your houses? Men come and go, they enter into your dwellings, and go out, they come to your house and they come to mine. Now what have they seen in thy house? What have the messengers of Babylon seen in your house? What have they seen in your life? What have they seen in your testimony? They have come to you; and have you talked to them of gold and silver? They had all that in Babylon, but they did not have God there. They had ointment and armor, and spices and splendor enough out there, but that little city that crowned the height of Zion had something of which Babylon could not boast. It had the temple and glory of God, it had the worship of the Lord, it had a God whose angel could smite an army, or whose hand could heal a dying king.

What have they seen in thy house? He did not show them the temple. There is no indication that he took them where he went to spread the letter of the king before the Lord. Perhaps they had prejudices he did not want to shock. Perhaps he thought they would not appreciate religious things, and so he talked to them about glory, and splendor, and fine things, and worldly adornments. There is a great deal of this thing going on in this world. I heard Major Whittle in Lynn one time telling of a man who came to him when he was in business who wanted to buy some brass filings, and he talked about that brass, and he did not seem to come to any point, but he kept talking about the brass. By and by, a few days after, he saw the man's wife, and she asked him, "Did my husband come to see you?" "Yes." "Well, what about it?" "Well, he was talking about buying some brass." "Well," said she "that was all nonsense, he wanted to talk about religion." There he was talking about brass, and that man was fooling around with brass, and Major Whittle was talking brass, when all the time he wanted to talk of his soul's salvation and did not dare to tell of it.

What have they heard in your house? Has it been brass, brass, brass? What have you shown them? The pictures on your wall, the articles of bric-a-brac curiosity heaped on your mantel-piece, the treasures you have gathered, wood, hay, and stubble? What have they seen in your house? Have they heard that God rules the house? Have they seen that Christ dwells there? Have they been told the story of deliverance and victories and triumph in the name of the Lord Jesus? I tell you there is many an aching heart that wants to hear that story, that you do not know anything about. Many a burdened soul hunting for rest, and here we are talking about brass; here we are showing the gold, silver, precious ointment, spices, and the gay things, and feasting the covetous eyes of the Babylonian ambassadors on the thing which they have already had enough of and to spare.

What was the result? Those men went back, not to tell of the dealings of God, not to tell of the angelic defences, not to tell of the mighty healing power of the Almighty One, but to tell that there was a chance for spoil and splendor, and it was not long before Babylon's armies marched to that city and took everything there was there and carried it away, and that very king's descendants were servants in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Did you ever notice another thing? Fifteen years were added to that man's life. When he died, Manasseh, who was twelve years old, began to reign,—that vilest king that ever sat on the throne of Judah,—who filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, who restored idolatry, abolished the worship of Almighty God, and committed such crimes that they resulted in the utter ruin of that city and that people. That king was born after the time when God said to Hezekiah, "Thou shalt die and not live." It is safe to accept the dealings of God, to bow submissively to his will. When he says live, live; and if he says die, it is all right. If he gives deliverance, rejoice in it. But let the question come up to us every day, What have they seen in thine house? What is the world seeing in our lives, what is it seeing in our business, what is it seeing in everything and everywhere? Are we a saved, redeemed, separated people? Or are we still entangled with the worldly things, and led astray by that which pleases the eye?

The innocence of the intention abates nothing of the mischeif of the example.—*Robert Hall.*